

RAPID INTERVENTION CREW TEAMS

**Arlington Fire Department
Fire Training Academy**

January 1998

PURPOSE STATEMENT

The purpose of this month's program is to present guidelines and practices of a basic Search and Rescue Team in a manner that will enable the team members to safely and effectively perform basic rescue operations, under proper supervision, of trapped, lost or unaccounted for fellow fire fighters.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

At the completion of this program, the firefighter will be able to:

- 1. Explain why fire companies get trapped and die in burning structures**
- 2. Recognize problems associated with fire fighter deaths, and offer actions to be taken to minimize risks.**
- 3. Define acronyms associated with fire fighter search and rescue teams established at other fire departments around the country.**
- 4. Check and verify strategies and tactics related to search and rescue procedures.**
- 5. Recognize conditions which can activate a R.I.C. Team.**

6. Recall when and where to establish a R.I.C. team.

INTRODUCTION:

One of the most common situations in which a rescue unit is needed is for rescue operations on the fireground. The primary reason for having a rescue unit at a working fire is to rescue trapped or overcome firefighters. When firefighters are in trouble, it is often the specialized training and equipment that the rescue unit has that are needed to save them. A well-trained and well-equipped rescue unit can be an extremely valuable resource on the fireground.

This month's program will address this very important issue of search and rescue units on the fireground. More specifically called Rapid Intervention Crews.

While searching a fire building for civilian occupants is the task most frequently assigned to a rescue company, the primary reason for having a rescue unit at a working fire is to rescue trapped or overcome firefighters. When firefighters are in trouble, it is often the specialized training and equipment that the rescue unit has that are needed to save them.

<p>LESSON TITLE: Rapid Intervention Crew Teams</p> <p>Classroom Hours -1.0</p>

PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVE (S):

At the completion of this program, the fire fighter will be able to:

- 1. Explain why fire companies get trapped and die in burning structures**
- 2. Recognize problems associated with fire fighter deaths, and offer actions to be taken to minimize risks**
- 3. Define acronyms associated with fire fighter search and rescue teams**

established at other fire departments around the country

- 4. Check and verify strategies and tactics related to search and rescue procedures**
- 5. Recognize conditions which can activate a R.I.C. Team**
- 6. Recall when and where to establish a R.I.C. Team**

MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES:

Television Monitor

Video Cassette Recorder

INSTRUCTIONAL AIDS:

Handouts – 3

Exercises – 1

Videotape - 1

REFERENCES:

INTRODUCTION:

One of the most common situations in which a rescue unit is needed is for rescue operations on the fireground. The primary reason for having a rescue unit at a working fire is to rescue trapped or overcome firefighters. When firefighters are in trouble, it is often the specialized training and equipment that the rescue unit has that are needed to save them. A well-trained and well-equipped rescue unit can be an extremely valuable resource on the fireground. This month's program will address this very important issue of search and rescue units on the fireground. More specifically called in the Arlington Fire Department, Rapid Intervention Crews.

PRESENTATION:

INSTRUCTIONAL TOPICS	THINGS TO DO OR SAY
INTRODUCTION (2 minutes) Objectives 1,2,3, 4, 5, 6	A. State the purpose of this month's program to participants B. Introduce this month's program to participants
PROGRAM OBJECTIVES (4 minutes) Objectives 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6	A. Distribute Handout # 1 to participants B. Review Program Objectives with participants C. Explain this month's program offers guidelines to be considered for establishing a R.I.C Team in the Arlington Fire Department.
REASONS COMPANIES GET TRAPPED AND DIE (15 minutes) Objectives 1	A. Distribute Handout # 2 to participants B. Review Handout # 2 with participants C. Discuss each of the items separately with the participants Allow participants to offer solutions for each reason listed on Handout # 2
VIDEOTAPE PROGRAM (19 minutes) Objectives 1,2,3,4,5,6	A. Introduce videotape program to participants B. Show videotape program to participants
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS (10 minutes)	A. Distribute Handout # 3 to participants

Objectives 2

- B. Open a discussion** with participants on “**Actions to Be Taken**” by Lost/Trapped Firefighters
- C. Review Handout # 3**, and ensure that each participant recognizes the **proper sequence of actions** to be taken if lost, trapped or unaccounted for during an incident

GO TO SUMMARY SECTION (Last Page)

SUMMARY

This month’s program introduced the concept of Rapid Intervention Crews and guidelines to be followed to minimize the lost of life and prevention of injuries due to firefighters being trapped in burning structures. The National Fire Protection Association and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration suggests that all fire departments would benefit from having skilled personnel trained to respond to emergencies involving fellow firefighters who get trapped or lost.

This program has explained why companies get trapped. How to recognize problems associated with fire fighter deaths. How to recognize conditions which can activate a Rapid Intervention Crew, and actions to be taken if lost or trapped. And where to establish a Rapid Intervention Crew on the fire ground.

APPLICATION

Involvement by all participants in the practice phase of this program will ensure that proper actions will be taken to minimize the exposure of rescue personnel to serious injuries in the performance of their duties.

Train on Buddy Breathing and changing out depleted air bottles of a trapped firefighter. Train in using tools in darkened confined areas. Search and Find. Take training seriously.

EVALUATION

KNOWLEDGE DEMONSTRATION EXERCISE

APPROXIMATE TIME FOR COMPLETION OF THE KDE: 15 minutes

1. **Distribute blank KDEs** to each firefighter.
2. Have each firefighter complete the exercise and return for evaluation.
3. **Complete Monthly Training Record** for each member.

REASONS COMPANIES GET TRAPPED AND DIE

- ☐ **Conditions deteriorate rapidly**
- ☐ **Inexperienced Officers**
- ☐ **Water Loss**
- ☐ **Improper Size-up**
- ☐ **Failure to Follow Basic Safe Fire Principles**
- ☐ **Failure to Identify Possible Problems during Pre-planning**
- ☐ **Energy-efficient Windows**
- ☐ **Failure to Detect Secondary Fires**
- ☐ **Fire fighter getting above fire without knowing it**

ACTIONS TAKEN BY LOST/TRAPPED FIREFIGHTERS

- ✓ **Call for Help “ May Day”**
 - ✓ **Activate P.A.S.S.**
 - ✓ **Stay Together (if possible)**
 - ✓ **Follow Hose Line or Life Line**
 - ✓ **Conserve Air Supply**
 - ✓ **Use Light, Radio (if working)**
 - ✓ **Describe Surroundings**
- ### **RIC TEAM SCRIPT**

INTRODUCTION

We know that the NFPA and OSHA require a minimum of two firefighters outside the hazard zone, whenever a hazard zone is established. But what we need to understand is why we should form a RIC (Rapid Intervention Crew) team instead of depending on the old standard of personnel and equipment already on the scene.

A RIC team is immediately available to be placed into action. It provides us with a fresh team of skilled personnel. It provides us with a team that has already gathered vital information for ascertaining rescues. It provides us with a team that already has the rescue tools needed for most rescue scenarios. And this team is readily identifiable by the RIC team tags that are applied to their helmets.

REASONS COMPANIES GET LOST/TRAPPED/DIE

Conditions deteriorate rapidly. Obvious reasons might be due to inexperienced officers sometimes having tunnel vision, or they react too quickly. Conditions dictate they should have gone into a defensive mode, water loss, error by the AO,

busted lines, improper size-up, back draft, heavy fire in rear, failure to follow basic safe fire principles, not wearing helmets, not using SCBAs, failure to identify possible problems during pre-fire planning, basement areas, no fire walls, gang - plate construction, energy efficient windows that hold heat inside the structure and decrease your ability of escape quickly. Failure to detect secondary fires up above leading to a collapse. Firefighter unknowingly gets above the fire. Or being unaware of a basement below.

REPORTING TO INCIDENT COMMANDER:

RIC teams report directly to the IC. IC briefs the RIC team members. This would be the time the IC would give the RIC team members an overview of what is going on, and what could possibly go wrong. At this time he/she might go ahead and inform the RIC Team members why the RIC team is being formed, what his/her expectations are, and a little bit of information regarding his/her strategy and tactics.

WHERE TO ESTABLISH A RIC TEAM:

RIC teams need to be near the Command Post. They need to be visible to command so he/she can call them into service at a moments notice. They should be within verbal contact of the Incident Commander. Remaining out of the way, but being alert to emergencies and conditions around them, and any changes that could be taking place in the hazardous zone. The team should be monitoring radio communications so if needed, they will have a better understanding of what is going on and what will probably be necessary.

ACTIONS NEEDED:

These are the actions that need to be considered by the IC once the decision is made to activate the RIC team:

The Victim- Call for help, "May Day", Activate PASS, stay together, if possible, follow hose or life line, conserve air supply. One suggestion here if you do run out of air, be aware that if you do breach the pipes in the wall there is air in those areas that might be able to help you survive until help arrives.

PRACTICE AND TRAIN SAFETY:

Train on Buddy Breathing and changing out depleted air bottles of a trapped firefighter. Train in using tools in darkened confined areas. Search and Find. Take training seriously.

RIC TEAM BAGS:

The RIC Team Bag is a proposed bag that we are trying to implement to placed in each Battalion Chief's van. This would allow any company that is available at the scene of an incident to become a RIC Team rather than just having Truck companies as RIC Teams. The proposed contents of the bag would be as follows:
Rescue Rope with knots every 10 feet.

Spare radios so each RIC Team member would have his or her own radio

Heavy duty lights,

Extra Air Bottles,

RIC decals for the helmets so each member would be readily identifiable

We are attempting to get infrared scopes to increase visibility in the dark thus making rescue efforts a lot quicker.

SUMMARY:

Remember a RIC Team's primary responsibility is to locate the victims and rescue them, if possible. Time is of the essence. RIC Teams cannot possibly carry all the tools that they will need for rescue. Don't forget, if the situation calls for assistance, then call them! You have manpower and equipment standing by outside, and a city full of resources. Remember to try and keep a RIC Team in place, but if the crew is needed by IC, it will be necessary to replace them. As long as the emergency is ongoing and crews are in the hazard zone a RIC team has to be in position. The RIC Team is a new concept for fire departments nationwide. But remember, the team itself is only as good as the department that trains and supports this tactic, along with the crews that dedicate themselves to it.